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Message Text

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ACTION SS-25

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S E C R E T TOKYO 2311

EXDIS

TO ASST SECRETARY HABIB FROM HODGSON

E.O. 11652: XGDS-3
TAGS: PINT, JA, US
SUBJECT: LOCKHEED AFFAIR

REF: STATE 030077

1. IN MEETING FEBRUARY 16 WITH FONMIN, I MADE INDELIBLY CLEAR DEPARTMENT'S POSITION CONCERNING GOJ REQUESTS FOR LOCKHEED DOCUMENTS AS YOU RELATED TO NISHIDA (REFTEL). THE FONMIN SAID HE UNDERSTANDS COMPLETELY.

2. I QUERIED FONMIN SHARPLY ON WHAT SEEMED TO US TO BE CONFLICTING VIEWS WITHIN GOJ ON HOW THE USG SHOULD DEAL WITH THE LOCKHEED REVELATIONS SUBJECT. I NOTED THAT ON ONE HAND WE WERE BEING ASKED TO USE EXTREME CAUTION IN CONVEYING IN-FORMATION, ESPECIALLY NAMES, AND ON THE OTHER, FOUND OURSELVES THE RECIPIENT BOTH OF DIRECT REQUESTS FOR ALL RELEVANT IN-FORMATION, INCLUDING NAMES, AND OF ABUSE FROM PUBLIC OFFICIALS, SUCH AS THAT OF HOME MINISTER FUKUDA, FOR NOT RELEASING ALL AVAILABLE INFORMATION.

3. FONMIN READILY ACKNOWLEDGED THAT THE CONDITIONS I DESCRIBED DID INDEED EXIST AND EXPLAINED AS FOLLOWS:
A) CONSIDERABLE DIFFERENCE HAS EXISTED WITHIN THE GOJ AND THE LDP ON HOW BEST TO HANDLE THIS OVERALL CIRCUM-STANCE. THE POSITIONS OF RESPECTIVE INDIVIDUALS AND
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FACTIONS TEND TO SHIFT AS NEW DISCLOSURES AND PUBLIC

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REACTIONS OCCUR.
B) THE EARLIER GOJ PLEA FOR RESTRAINT IN RELEASE OF INFORMATION NOW HAS TO BE TEMPERED BECAUSE OF THE ADVERSE PUBLIC REACTION IN JAPAN TO NEWS THAT THERE MAY EXIST IN WASHINGTON SOME UNDISCLOSED INFORMATION THAT MAY INCLUDE NAMES OF GOJ OFFICIALS. COMMENT: UNFORTUNATELY, NOW THAT IT HAS BECOME PUBLIC KNOWLEDGE, OUR WELL-INTENTIONED ATTEMPT TO AVOID POLITICAL REPERCUSSIONS WHICH COULD ADVERSELY AFFECT U.S.-JAPAN RELATIONS IS BEING EXPLOITED BY SOME OPPOSITION GROUPS AND OTHERS HERE TO SUGGEST THAT OUR TWO GOVERNMENTS MAY BE INVOLVED IN SOME SORT OF COVER-UP.

4. FONMIN THEN EXPRESSED HIS VIEW THAT BOTH GOVERNMENTS WILL BE BEST SERVED IF WE CAN AVOID RELEASE OF AMBIGUOUS AND UNVERIFIABLE INDIVIDUAL IDENTIFICATIONS AND OTHER DATA THAT WILL RAISE MORE QUESTIONS THAN IT WILL RESOLVE. FONMIN SAID THIS AFTER REPEAT AFTER AFFIRMING HE FULLY UNDERSTOOD NATURE AND IMPLICATIONS OF THE REQUEST CONVEYED BY NISHIDA AS WELL AS YOUR RESPONSE.

5. I NOTED EXTREMELY DIFFICULT POSITION WE ARE PLACED IN BY RANDOM PUBLIC OUTBURSTS HERE AND THE DIFFERING AND CHANGING DEMANDS THAT ARE BEING MADE OF US. FONMIN ACKNOWLEDGED AND IMPLIED THESE THINGS COULD ONLY BE UNDERSTOOD IN THE CONTEXT OF THE MAGNITUDE AND PRESENTLY FORMLESS NATURE OF THE PROBLEM. HE NOTED HE PERSONALLY IS EXERTING HIS BEST EFFORTS TO PROVIDE SOME MANAGEMENT TO THE MATTER.

6. COMMENT: IT SEEMS TO US THAT FONMIN IS SEARCHING FOR SOME DAMAGE-LIMITING STRATEGY ON THIS MATTER, THAT WHILE OTHER GOJ OFFICIALS AND LDP LEADERS HAVE NOT YET WHOLLY ACCEPTED SUCH A STRATEGY, FONMIN BELIEVES THEY ARE MOVING TOWARD IT, AND HE FEELS THAT IN THIS STRATEGY U.S. COOPERATION IS NEEDED MAINLY IN AVOIDING RELEASE OF AMBIGUOUS OR HEARSAY TYPE OF DAMAGING INFORMATION, ESPECIALLY NAMES OF INDIVIDUALS INVOLVED WITHOUT CLEAR-CUT EVIDENCE OF INVOLVEMENT.

7. I REALIZE IT IS DIFFICULT FOR THE DEPARTMENT TO MAKE A JUDGEMENT ON THE WORKABILITY OF OUR ROLE IN SUCH A LOOSELY CON-
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CEIVED STRATEGY WITHOUT BEING FACED CLEARLY WITH ALL THE SPECIFIC DECISIONS IT INVOLVES, BUT IF DEPARTMENT FINDS THAT WHAT IS BEING SUGGESTED TO US BY THE FONMIN IS WHOLLY UNACCEPTABLE AS A CONCEPT OR UNWORKABLE, I WOULD APPRECIATE BEING SO ADVISED SOONEST TO THAT I CAN MAKE THAT FACT CLEAR TO HIM.
HODGSON

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